

**Written Testimony of Keith Schoppe Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee, February 13, 2009,
Testimony in Support of: Senate Bill 3 "An Act Prohibiting the Acquisition or Use of Certain
Parcels of Land as Ash Residue Disposal Areas"**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Environment Committee:

I reside in the Town of Franklin. The fact that Franklin is such a "quiet" town with rural character and little industry is why I chose to buy a home here in 1995 and later start and raise my family. I am a potential life-long resident and the future of Franklin is of utmost importance to my family.

As I am sure you are aware, The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) together with Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA), as encouraged by Connecticut's General Statutes, has chosen a site in Franklin as the best location for a toxic ash landfill. I would love to tell you that I have an open mind and am willing to weigh the pros and cons of such an endeavor, but I can not. There is simply no price high enough in my mind that can justify even the potential of polluting our land, wells, and open space here in Franklin – not to mention the health of our families and neighbors.

The facts, the studies, and common sense tell even the most casual observer that the ash is extremely toxic, that it will leach heavy metals and other toxins over time, and it will negatively impact Franklin and surrounding towns for generations to come. Did you know that the chosen site sits directly on top of a very large, pristine (class A to AA) aquifer? In a time when natural resources are being exhausted at alarming rates, how did the State's very own DEP determine that the best location to dump toxic ash is over a potential source of millions and millions of gallons of potable water?!

In addition to the aquifer, the 350-acre site consists of some of the most beautiful forest in CT, nestled along the banks of the Shetucket River. In this forest reside an abundance of wildlife, trees, meadows, and streams. There also lies a cemetery that dates back to the 1700's. The DEP is charged with protecting such natural wonders, not aiding and abetting their destruction. The DEP's own mission statement demands nothing less: "...the mission of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is to conserve, improve and protect the natural resources and environment of the State of Connecticut in such a manner as to encourage the social and economic development of Connecticut while preserving the natural environment and the life forms it supports in a delicate, interrelated and complex balance, to the end that the state may fulfill its responsibility as trustee of the environment for present and future generations."

I am vehemently opposed to any proposal for a landfill in our Town; and, after doing considerable research on the subject, I am opposed to ash landfills in any location, especially near residences and clean water supplies. Burning garbage is cheap, and generates electricity and profits for companies such as CRRA, Wheelabrator, and others, but it leaves behind huge amounts of toxic residue that will continue to pollute the environment for generations. Simply finding another landfill site for toxic ash is shortsighted. Better, more efficient, and environmentally friendly technologies presently exist that do not require landfilling toxic by-products of the incineration process. Long-term strategies should be deployed including recycling, renewable energy, and zero-waste policies.

Of course, the alternatives cost more and this reaches the crux of the matter. Enormous profit will result at the expense of our small, rural, unknown, politically impotent Town of Franklin. This whole issue boils down to politics and profit, and has nothing to do with sensible environmental planning.

If the need for the landfill can not be assuaged, then the landfill should be constructed on top of an existing "Brown Field". There is no shortage of (already) polluted sites in the State that could be

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converted into landfill space without destroying precious natural resources and the entire character of our tiny, agricultural town.

The archaic siting criteria that were used by DEP no longer apply. In fact, they were established almost 20 years ago back in 1989. The criteria were based on the idea of "reducing pollution by dilution". This is not the answer, nor should it have ever been. We can not close our eyes, cover our ears, and pretend that we don't know better.

I strongly urge you to support proposed Senate Bill 3; and in so doing, send a clear message to DEP and CRRA that their complete lack of responsible long-term environmental planning should not become the burden born by the residents of Franklin, and the citizens of the State.

Respectfully yours,

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